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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

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Dear Colleague,

As you know, General Peter Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has come under heavy fire for his comments regarding the incompatibility of homosexual conduct with military service and for expressing his personal convictions regarding the morality of homosexuality itself.

As you also know, Congress in 1993 passed and President Clinton approved (as part of the Uniform Code of Military Justice) language often described as the "don't ask, don't tell" policy regarding homosexual behavior as it relates to service in the United States Armed Forces. Fundamentally, the rule prohibits recruiters and other Service members from inquiring about other Service members' sexual practices, even as it affirms that homosexual behavior has no place in the American military.

General Pace, with virtually all senior military leaders (both active and retired), has again affirmed the law. Of note is that despite condemnations of his remarks by some of our fellow Members of Congress, no one in the Majority leadership has introduced legislation to overturn the existing policy.

Moreover, it is ironic that at a time when many Members of the House are calling for greater candor on the part of our men and women in uniform regarding their personal views and experiences, when a distinguished officer like Peter Pace expresses his own convictions on a matter of public debate, he is castigated for "intolerance" and even bigotry.

General Pace has earned the right to speak. As a Rifle Platoon leader in Viet Nam, president of the Marine Corps University, Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Southern Command and numerous senior-level command and advisory posts and as winner of more military decorations than readily can be enumerated, he has every right to express his views – however upsetting they might be to armchair critics whose allegiance to political correctness supersedes their respect for someone who has defended, with his life, their ability to live in a free country and enjoy the right of free speech to criticize him so vehemently.

Perhaps instead of castigating this outstanding patriot, we ought simply and humbly to say "thank you" – for his decades of service, his courage and integrity and his dedication to those who wear the uniform of the United States. And perhaps we should have the integrity to listen closely to this man who possesses so much military experience instead of allowing politicians to micromanage military policy.

Sincerely,

Bill Sali